Small Bump

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/3679947.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham & Margot Verger, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Margot Verger, Mason Verger
Additional Tags:	Episode: s02e11 Ko No Mono, -post, Will Knows, Poor Will, Will thinks about being a father, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Margot is pregnant for months, See what happens during that time, Mason is a prick as always, Hannibal is a Cannibal, Hannibal is Hannibal, Possessive Hannibal, Manipulative Hannibal, Fluff, Sad, tragic, You've been warned, The Author Regrets Nothing, The Author Regrets Everything, Help
Language:	English
Series:	Part 11 of Saligia (OS)
Stats:	Published: 2015-04-17 Words: 5,939 Chapters: 1/1

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by Aerosol

Summary

One clue. Had he not felt at least a swelling idea in the folds of his darkly lit subconscious back then? Had he not suspected a perfidious form of trap? She was one of Lecter's patients, so why did it even surprise him anymore? Randall Tier had also been in this man’s treatment once and one night he had broken thorugh his window in the skeletal armor of a dead animal to shred his flesh into frantic snippets. Had he been blinded by the fact that she was female? Or because she had come for an act to him that had, among blood and scratches promised pure, naked ecstasy instead of murder? Maybe both. Perhaps neither.

And the disturbing thought that somewhere, in a strange house he’d never enter, cramped with art and all kinds of expensive toys he’d never see, and stroked, petted and held high by hands he’d never touch, would soon be someone with his meager smile and his hair, wandering through long corridors and rooms, laughing with fresh, unused voice into the halls of the world, kept him awake until the bitter morning.
And the morning after.
And the morning after.
And the morning ...

Notes

Hello my lovelies :)

This is a OneShot, written for the topic of Spring FuriarossaAndMimma's Fannibal-Fanmagazine concerns with.

You can find her tumblr-blog here : http://hannibalartblog.tumblr.com/

And her deviantart here : http://furiarossaandmimma.deviantart.com/

It's definitely worth a look. She has some awesome ideas and is a lovely person ;3

You are my one and only.
You can wrap your fingers round my thumb
and hold me tight.
Oh, you are my one and only.
You can wrap your fingers round my thumb
and hold me tight.

And you'll be alright.

~~

~ October ~

The whiskey whirled like shimmering honey, as he waved the glass before he took it to his dry lips and forced it down his throat. The liquid ran hot and hearty on his papillae and although he had internalized the taste for years, he coughed as if he had choked on the sudden sharpness filling his lungs.

His eyes moistened with water and he blinked several times violently to curb the veil in front of his sight. Behind his windows the night stretched its blind and black tentacles across the land. The moon nestled behind a dense blanket of silvery rimmed clouds. The fire bestowed a yellow touch of light to the room, but also this would soon pass away and leave not mora than a smoldering pile of ash and sparks. Will looked forward to it.

Everything ended. Somewhere, sometime. And when the fuel was depleted, there had to be a fresh log to ignite the flame anew.

But Will was not in the mood to feed the fire. He waited until darkness came and wrapped him in its dull sheen like a death veil. A wet nose nudged against his wrist and he raised his fingers in a mechanical manner to stroke Winston's soft, warm fur. The glass in his other hand was empty. He put it on the table beside him, aimlessly staring into the void.

Margot Verger. Pregnant. *From him*.
It had been hours since this message reached him, since *she had told him to his face*, and yet her words still rustled in surging waves against the bony walls of his skull, penetrating every thought that dared to emerge on the surface.

I'm on the pill she had assured him as they had laid in his bed, entwined and panting. He had believed her without hesitation. Now he realized it was a lie all along, and just how

obnoxiously easy it had been to fool him. He should have insisted on a condom. But he had not. It had been a shameful long time since he had shared sexual contact with another person. The heat. The friction. The quivering excitement. A touch of sacred forgetfulness, encased by the embossed pleasure of instinct. It had been **too** long. It was also the only activity in addition to killing, which made him feel more alive.

The deception had turned into something more substantial. It rushed into the brood chamber of a hot, healthy body and grew into a child. **His** child.

It seemed almost like a bad joke to him. A snub, demanded by God. He had thought about being a father earlier. Pictured Abigail as his daughter. Then Hannibal had taken her away from him. He still stood up in the middle of the night sometimes to stumble to the bathroom, throwing up something that once included a human ear, but now only stomach acid and (if he had not dined with Lecter the other day) the faded chunks of a lean supper.
Margot's action had even brought Dr.Lecter a bit out of sync, which happened rarely. He had indeed encouraged her to free herself from Mason and his corruptive, narcissistic vein du producing a heir of her own, but he had not considered the possibility that she would just take Will as the donator of the necessary seed. Will thought to open a second bottle of whiskey from his store. He did not.
One clue. Had he not felt at least a swelling *idea* in the folds of his darkly lit subconscious back then? Had he not suspected a perfidious form of trap? She was one of Lecter's patients, so why did it even surprise him anymore? Randall Tier had also been in this man's treatment once and one night he had broken thorugh his window in the skeletal armor of a dead animal to shred his flesh into frantic snippets. Had he been blinded by the fact that she was female? Or because she had come for an act to him that had, among blood and scratches promised pure, naked ecstasy instead of murder? Maybe both. Perhaps neither.

And the disturbing thought that somewhere, in a strange house he'd never enter, cramped with art and all kinds of expensive toys he'd never see, and stroked, petted and held high by hands he'd never touch, would soon be someone with his meager smile and his hair, wandering through long corridors and rooms, laughing with fresh, unused voice into the halls of the world, kept him awake until the bitter morning.
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November

The characteristic hooting swept like drumbeats through his diaphragm.

His fingers clenched a little too tightly around the plastic casing of the telephone receiver and he could feel the nervousness threw in fanning tracks on his back and the hair held tightly in

his neck, but he tried to hide it from himself. *Tried.*

He was aware of what a stupid idea it was to call her. She did not want him, never had, not even in that night. He had been a means to an end, a machine component in order to complete the set and keep it working**.** With a sigh he ran his fingers through his hair, plucking the locks that jumped to the crown of his forehead. He stood leaning against the kitchen counter, the cordless telephone in hand, waiting. He could do no more than wait. Although, yes, he could interrupt the call before she had a real chance to respond. He could let it go. Thousands of men went to hospitals to donate their sperm and 90 percent of them cared not a whit about the babies that were born through it. It would all be so incredibly easy / easier if it did not matter to him as well. He had to pursue his vengeance, lure Hannibal till they could catch him red-handed, although Jack would probably much rather see him dead and pale in a coffin than serving his remaining years behind brick walls and bars.

Putting a stop to Hannibal's game was the most important thing to do. Right?

It was still ringing. He was just about to hang up, as it clicked in the line.

Hello?

Will's throat felt as if it had been lined with parchment paper. He swallowed.

"Hey, Margot, it's me." A pause. "Will."

Silence at the other end of the phone. Will almost thought she had already quit the call, but the sporadic noise of breath destroyed the theory.
"Give me a second." said Margot at last. Will heard a rustling, the staccato sound of high heels that went on smoothly waxed parquet. Then, how a door was pulled shut. There was a faint *crack* , a final snort, searching for countenance.

"What do you want? Why are you calling me?" Margot's voice was cold and distant. Will had not expected otherwise, but it still made him mentally take a step backwards.

"The baby-" he began, but was cut off immediately.

"I already told you that it doesn't affect you anymore. You don't account for what happens to me now."

Will's eyes narrowed slightly. The old anger cooked up inside him bubbling and let him move a few steps away from his previous uncertainty. *You don't account for it.* He wouldn't be so sure about that.

"Oh, no?" he said harshly. "You have not initiated me in your plan, but it's still **my** child. I am the father."

Barely a laugh from a female throat was the answer.

“So what? Being a biological father is not to the same as **being a father**.”

“I know.” Will stared down, knuckles white and bloodless. It was early evening and the burgundy of the setting sun poured downon the floor in bloody torrents. He followed the smooth transitions as he spoke. “I know.” Fragmentic memories of his father emerged from the vault of his mind, oily, shiny snapshots as if they had been taken with a Polaroid camera. He inhaled air through his nose and stopped his breath abruptly until they disappeared back into their grayish fog.

He heard Margot sigh. The soft sound of pad balancing a new weight. She had sat down. He could imagine her well, sitting in a beautiful, but clunky-looking chair that flattered her graceful, upright figure**.** She, one leg casually crossed over the other, one hand resting in her lap, the other holding the phone to her ear. Nothing about this image was false or rebellious. He imagined how her seated figure would change within months. How her belly and breasts would become plumper. Your rosy colored face, her veins vigorously pumping blood and hormones. She would keep her bold elegance in spite of everything, he was sure of that**.**

“I’ve apologized.” she mused slowly. Suddenly, she sounded very tired. Were these the first, tentative signs of mood swings? Will chose his next words with persistence.

“I don’t want an apology.” he said.

“What do you want then!? Money? A part of the Verger empire? Any messed up *relationship* ? I’m not keen on men and their *equipment*.”

Will took a deep breath.

“I want to see you.” he said simply. “And ... I want to know if you’re well.”

Silence. It took a few minutes. Will persisted.

“I have no romantic interest in you.” he added precautionary. Again, this silence. He would have preferred to study the stirrings of her face and pecked her thoughts from the corners of her pursed smile.

“Tomorrow. Park Café, three o’clock. Be there.” he finally heard her say. Her tone wrapped in an indefinable timbre.

Before he could answer, the conversation ended and the line was dead.

December

“I hear that you’ve spent much time with Margot frequently.”

The question could not catch Will off guard. After all, he knew Hannibal and his habit to be informed about everything, being used to control every tiny detail that should fit into the painting of his own life. Failure or incident was not an option. Will thought that the sting Margot had placed between his ribs with her recent action sat deep and buried itself up to that moment when they sat in his practice, sitting opposite each other. A fat, yet invisible hole inside his flesh. Will turned the filled wine glass sluggishly in his fingers. He had not drunk a single drop out of it yet. Today he was not in the mood for wine and laurels. Although, he did not get *laurels* anyway, not today, for Hannibal's aura seemed unusually haggard this time. Will could imagine why. He stood up well-mannered, and brought the glass to Hannibal's desk. He felt his eyes rest on his body while he did so, glowing and dark, measuring his every move like a cougar, preparing itself to jump down his throat
“I don’t remember that I need to ask for your permission when it comes to my personal life.” he began, so quiet that one hardly heard the aggressive component in his voice long as it wasn’t expected. Hannibal, however, did expect it.

“Of course not. You’re a free man and I’ve never felt the urge to act as your jailer.”

“You haven’t? So you rather see yourself as my judge.” Thoughtfully, he ran the tip of his index finger over the wet edge of the glass. A whirring sound sighed through the room. It resembled the cry of chalk scratching on a blackboard. “Although, I forgot - this also officials have entlassen.¨ with a memorable Intermezzo from his service.”

He thought of the scene in the courtroom, the old man hung like Jesus on the cross and the allegorical scale of the holy Justitia in his hand, its shells outweighed by heart and brain.

A vague pause.

“I felt that his decision did not match justice.” replied Hannibal then, his tone cool as ever. Will’s fingers paused and he leaned back on the desk, his arms folded over his chest.

“A justice that only counts for *you*.”

Hanibal bowed his head slightly to the side. The wedged hands in his lap did not move.

“Every human being incarnates an own sense of justice that differs from the common thought. The country would sink into anarchic chaos if there’d be no law that lists all people needing to accept same values and standards, regardless of what their true opinion might strike for.”

“And yet you killed the judge because he did not represent your own understanding of justice.” Will intentionally sought the sight of the doctor and slmost simultaneously, he regretted it, because the expression in those eyes threatened to burn him. “Placing your welfare above the general public, Dr. Lecter? How rude.”

“Let me explain it with an example.” Hannibal made a move to rise from his chair. “A man

stands in front of a gallows where two persons are attached to, each with a rope around the throat. One person is his wife, the one he loves dearly for two years. The other person is a little boy, a precedent of starved youth who toddles in groups in the streets. He has never seen him before, does not know him, but he is innocent. But his wife has murdered her sister. What do you think? Which person will he choose and which leave to die?"

Will broke the contact and avoided his eyes.

"I dont know."

"Yes, you do." He perceived from the corner of his eye how Hannibal went and leaned beside him. They did not touch, but his presence was strong enough to accelerate his pulse. Not because of excitement, but of alert. The awareness to parry any attack that might come from the doctor. But Lecter did nothing. He looked at him from the side and Will felt his pupils like paws of horn and silver. "Who would you choose?" he heard Hannibal ask. Will thought.

"The boy." he said. "Nothing is crueler than killing a child."

He did not need to look at Hannibal to know that he nodded at his answer methodically.

"Do you develope paternal feelings again, Will?" The question was carried forward softly, but Will could no longer be fooled by it.

"It's not as it was with Abigail. After I shot Garrett Jacob Hobbs a part of me found it only logical to replace the empty space he had left. Something you've successfully destroyed." He dipped his words into a little bitterness. Just a little bit ...

Hannibal beside him exhaled noisily. Will did not admit that it made his flesh crawl.

"I regret having done this to you. I wish it hadn't need to be."

"I told you not to lie."

"It was a necessity to further your metamorphosis's progression-"

"It's over. She's dead." Will cut him off coldly. "You can excuse yourself as often as you like, but *this* will never change."

"Will, do you intend to be more for Margot's child than its unnamed producer?" There it was. The question Will could not answer for himself. Like an arrow, stretched on Artemis' bow. He bowed his head.

"Maybe I do, maybe I don't." He pushed himself away from the desk and put his hands in his pockets to hide his clenching fists. "But even if – it would not concern you."

Hannibal acted unimpressed.

" It would if it affected our friendship."

“Our friendship remains as it is.” Will bit his lower lip, before looking back at the elder man. “It’s… non-negotiable.”

With these words he took his jacket and left the room without saying goodbye. Knowing how rude he was.
He could have cared no less.

January

“It shows already.”

Automatically, Margot placed a hand on her tender swelling belly while the other held her cup of tea and sipped at it gently. She wore a black sweater that covered her skin up to the wrists. Her terracotta-colored coat, lined with a collar of fox fur, hung over the back of her chair. Will kept his jacket on**.** The winds of January were not as cold as they had been a month ago, but they were still fresh and had teeth that could cut into skin. The casual chatter of people and clatter of crockery and cutlery rumbled around them. It had a peaceful and comfortable atmosphere.
It had been Margot's idea to meet in this bistro in the middle of the city today. She always chose the places and Will accepted it. She promised him meetings like this and he was allowed to observe how the aura of pregnancy started to surround her like a moat. Unyielding and protective, as well as more vulnerable than she had ever been before.

“Yes.” she said after a while, when she put the cup back on its saucer with a clack. A thick strand of her braid fell over her shoulder. “Fortunately for me, I’m spared of morning sickness at least. “I do not know if that’s a good or a bad sign.”

“Has Mason noticed anything?”

“If he had, I’d not be sitting here right now.” she said dryly. A thoughtful expression wove over the contours of her cheeks and her smooth forehead. “I’ll have to flee soon. A trip to nowhere, until I delivered the child.”

Will had already suspected something like this, but the information caught him hard and unkind anyway.

“I'll go *with* you.” he said promptly. Margot rolled her eyes.

“This is not necessary.”

“I don’t do it for necessity.”

“I know.” Her fingers left the handle of the cup and played with the straws that were fanned out in a metal box on each table like a colorful bouquet. “I’ll reach my limit in the fourth

month. Then I can't hide it under my clothes any longer."

"Are you scared?"

"Of whom? Mason?"

"The pain. The responsibility."

"I know pain." Her eyes crossed his. "Pushing out a little human between my spread legs will be no different than if one would break my arm. Or leg. Or both. Pain is pain after all." She let out a sigh. "At least it will be over faster than that. And according to the responsibility ... I will give birth to something that belongs to me and me alone. Something that will love me because *I'll* love it. Now that will be a nice change to what I experience usually."

"What if it's a girl?"

Margot stopped to play with the straws.

"I haven't thought about this yet." she said. Will did not need to make use of his empathy to realize that she was lying. He pushed his coffee aside and put both arms on the table.

"Would you abort it?"

"I dont know. I have no use for a girl. My father has expressly stated in his will that only a male heir is entitled to obtain the Verger Meat Packing Dynasty." She touched her upper lip shortly with the tip of her tongue before she continued. "It would be more merciful to kill her before birth, before she suffers under Mason's influence."

Will's gaze could have cut through steel.

"I'd never allow that." he rasped. Just the thought of this man laying hands on his own flesh and blood made him sick with murderous rage.

Margot merely shook her head.

"He would kill you." She smiled weakly. "He can hire enough people to do this for him."

"But there has to be a way!"

"There is. If it's a boy." She pierced at her watch, then opened her bag and fumbled for her wallet. He grabbed her arm to prevent her action for he wanted to take the bill himself, but she shook him off as naturally as if he were a fly. She pulled out some dollar notes and chucked them on the tablecloth. "Bye for now. I'll call you."

Will looked at her as she walked away. The sun painted bronze streaks in her brown hair and her movements were influenced by posture and control.

He drank his coffee before he went. At home, he was enthusiastically greeted by his barking

dogs. He scratched them between the ears, a forgotten smile wearing on his lips that did not reach his eyes.

February

-

“ ... A rattle?” Margot rolled the object, decorated with a red ribbon, between her fingers in disbelief. She raised a thinly plucked eyebrow. “You give me a rattle for Valentine's Day? Seriously?” Will thought he had never seen her being so perplexed. He scratched his neck, looked to the ground.

They walked on the paved road of an old park, their surroundings clouded by the green of awakening trees and shrubs. The winter slowly but surely lost some of its cold horror. Will had canceled the meeting with Dr. Lecter for today, who had not necessarily been happy about it. Will could not care less. Not, when the imminent mother of his child unexpectedly called him to (voluntarily) spend time with him. He could not say he desired her as well as she could not tell him that she was able to love him the way she loved women. But that was not of universal significance. They liked each other. The child forged a bond between them that was not tender, but solid. Will would have even called them ‘friends’. Sometimes she reminded him of Beverly with her rugged, uncontrived ways. It drove a sharp sting in his heart when he remembered how she had perished ... he would have done everything to spare Margot from this terrible fate.

“Sorry.” he said, his eyes directed to the pale-purple rattle in embarrassment. “I went shopping and I saw it in a toy store on display, I... well, I just –“

She raised her hand, something she often did to silence him. “Nevermind.” She wiggled it a little in her hand, up and down. The grains made a promising, rasping noise in their plastic cocoon. It reminded Will of the sound of hail pounding on his roof tiles. “At least it’s more original than jewelry or chocolate. Actually, you didn’t need to bring me anything.” Margot seemed amused. He saw through the rare sparkle in her eyes. He snorted.

“I wanted to.”

“You want more than it does good for you.” She swung the rattle from left to right, then embedded it loose and quiet between her fingers. Her walk was losing pace until she stopped completely, her eyes blank with depth, directed at the children's toy. Will stopped too, looking at her and waiting.

She cleared her throat softly.

“Will, what do you think of me? Be honest.”

He leaned his head to the side.

“What do you mean?”

“Do you think I’ll be a good mother?”

He thought.

“You won’t let your child down.” he decided. “This is a bonus already.” He gave her a reassuring smile. She did not answer, just stared at him. She was a beautiful woman. Attractive. Clever. Combative. He found it a bit of a shame that they would never be more than what they were now. But he could live with this. He could.

“what was *your* mother like?”

The question was like an ice pick, planted in his brain. His eyes darkened slightly.

“I don’t know her. She went right after she gave birth to me and left me and my father alone.”

“I'm sorry. Our mother died in childbirth. She gave her life for Mason’s and mine.”

Will almost laughed at this parallel. For it was so sad, actually.

“We both had no luck concerning mothers.” he said. He continued his walk. Margot followed him.

“No.” she drawled.

“Then we can only make it better.”

“Are you sure?”

He shrugged.

“What would be worse than not even trying?”

“Kill it. *By accident*.”

“We are not the murderers others expect us to be.”

“But we could. Still.”

“Yes.” He let out a whistling breath. “We could.” He turned his head, as if he were looking for something special. “Are you hungry? I’ll treat you.”

“I’m full.”

“Come on, you must eat for two now. You’ll get chubbier anyway – ouch!” She had pinched his arm. He rubbed the stinging skin with an afflicted expession until Margot had to laugh.

Will liked the sound. It was the first time he heard her laughter. Her *real* one.

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“I'm worried about my sister.”

Hannibal sat in absolute, universal peace, waiting for Mason to go on with his words. As this did not happen, he was the one who continued their conversation.

“What gives you reason to think that way?”

The heir of the Verger family clasped his hands behind his head and let himself sink back until he fully stretched out on the lounge.

“She behaves stranger than usual.” he muttered with closed eyes.

“How?”

“She goes out much more often than in the past, but does less sport. Horse-riding for example. And she exchanged her suits for jeans and sweaters. She doesn’t talk to me anymore.”

Hannibal looked at him thoughtfully.

“Did she previously enjoyed talking to you?”

Mason let out an annoyed snort. A few strands of blond hair stood up from his head like spikes, as if he had experienced an electric shock earlier.

“No, but back then I could at least argue with her**.** Now I can do what I want, tearing her clothes, denting her car, highlighting her *advantages* – nothing works. I miss her bite.”

Hannibal let this information sink in first. He leaned deeper into his chair. He would much rather talk with Will at this moment. Thinking of him ... yes, there was something he could do.

“Mason, did you also notice ... *other* changes of her?” His patient gave him a half suspicious, half bored look.

“Such as?”
~~~

“Mood swings.” Hannibal made a heavy pause. “Rounder face and body. Rosier, fertile skin. She keeps herself rather covered for a few weeks concerning terms of appearance, right?”

Mason's eyes remained on him, glued on his façade and he knew he had attained a devastating degree of his attention.

“Dr. Lecter… do you know what could be wrong with my sister?”

“'Know' is a bold word. But I like speculations.”

They were silent then. Mason split his mouth open, licking his dry lips.

“Do I have a problem, Dr. Lecter?” he asked with dangerous calm.

“Not yet. But it could become one. In several months.”

“How many exactly?”

“I'm no expert in this field. It would be unseemly to judge her state by mere looks.”

“You were a surgeon.”

“Not a pediatric one.”

Mason frowned.

“Why are you helping me?” he asked. “Don’t you have a confidentiality or something?” It was of purely mocking nature.

“Let's say your interests intersect with my own at this point.” the doctor said opaquely. He looked at his watch, counting the minutes. “You should attend to this matter as soon as possible.”

“Maybe I should.” Mason got up from the couch. He looked at him. In his bright eyes glistered something ... mischievious. “Thank you, Dr. Lecter. I’ll return the favor sometime.”

Hannibal gave a narrow smile.

“You owe me no thanks for something you intend to do on your own accord.” He also rose, went to open the door and lead his patient out of the room. “Please just remember to stick to the date for next week’s session more precisely. It is impolite to let your therapist wait. Finally, it’s your time that gets lost. Time is too precious to be wasted. Don’t you think so, too?”

The session was over.

March

Will was not in favor of hospitals. He had often stayed in them, linked to machines, splinted and bandaged. Too often that he could bring up any sympathy for the nostalgic atmosphere of help, support and healing which adhered the reputation of doctors (the demigods in in white) like an intrusive perfume.

This did not change when he crossed the long, white corridors. They had called and reported him that Margot had had a car accident. Someone had crushed into her and left before he could be caught. An everyday tale. A stranger made a mistake and ran away before one could sue him for it. Will did not believe this version for a single second. Inwardly, he cursed while at the same time he felt torn by guilt and hatred. It had been just a matter of time, but that it would bust that early ... two weeks. Two weeks more and Margot had taken her flight and would have been safe. Safe with him.

He stepped through the door the nurse had shown him and he felt his heart hit harder against the shell of flesh and bone, as he saw Margot lying Margot there. Her face was paved with superficial injuries and lacerations, her mouth shaded by a tube-like structure sending oxygen sent in her airways. Her skin glowed in a sickly white, her eyes closed but twitching under the lids back and forth apathetically. It was the image of complete defeat. And it laced Will's throat.

He carefully sat down beside her on the bed and hesitated briefly, before he took a hand and ran his thumb over a lost prancing strand of hair beneath her left eyebrow. He tucked it gently behind her ear. The delicate touch made her eyelids flutter and whisked the medication with sparks of panic shining in her eyes. They only blunted after she recognized his frame.

Will swallowed hard. He tried a smile that failed terribly and generated into a tortured grimace.

“Hey ...” he said softly. She just blinked without returning the salute.

“It was a boy.” she whispered. Her voice was muffled by the plastic cover, but did not reduce the pain that sowed in her voice. A single tear dripped from her right eye and trickled down her temple. That's all she showed of her current emotional state. Proud till death. “I wanted to call him Joel. Joel ...” Then she closed her eyes and her head fell to the side, caught in the numbing delirium the morphine had given her.

Will remained to sit next to her for quite a while and watched her mournful sleep. Finally, he got up and walked out of the room, pulling the door shut behind him. He leaned against the wall and threw a hazy gaze out of the window. The magnificent oak tree in front of this side of the hospital showed first, verdant branches. Spring marched ahead and would kill the last signs of winter during the following days. A fresh start. A birth that followed an eternal sleep.

Will did not really realize he crouched to the floor at some point, legs bent and his face

buried in his hands. He was too exhausted. He thought of the rattle no one would play with anymore and sobbed drily.

Joel. The second child he could not protect. Not from the danger and treachery of this world, not from himself.

Not from of Mason Verger.
Not from his own *uncle*.

And not for the first time, Will asked if he was cursed.
Cursed to live, while those he tried to love and gained importance in his life, died.

Everyone…but his psychiatrist.

***

'Cause you were just a small bump unborn for four months
then torn from life.
Maybe you were needed up there
but we're still unaware

as why.

~ Small Bump by Ed Sheeran: www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_af25…

...

“Why did you do it? Why did you kill my son!?”

He had not knocked and Hannibal was not surprised for one second when he rushed into his kitchen. He dried his hands off the previous dish washing before he turned to him and gave his full attention.

“Do you remember the little example I gave you, as we discussed the revision of our own justice?” he asked. Will stared at him with an impassive expression. Hannibal drew attention to his hands and seemed satisfied as there was no weapon in them. “Imagine that I was the man who had to make his decision to forfeit a life for another. My guilty beloved or a child that is indifferent to me. My second heart or someone who’d break my bones and steal my clothes as soon as I’d turn my back. Whom did I choose, Will?”

It was a rhetorical question. Will shook his head still, as if trying to throw off the answer from his skin like a leech.

“You’re a monster.”

“Am I?” Hannibal raised an eyebrow. “I’m not the one who prompted Carlo into causing Margot’s car accident and I was not the one who ordered the surgeons to remove her uterus. That was her brother. A nuisance, yes, I won’t controvert that.” he explained objectively.

“Mason only got on to her track because of you!” Will yelled at him and the volume rang in his ears. “You had no right to do this. YOU were the one who proposed Margot of getting pregnant in the first place.”

“I did not propose her to involve your genes.” Hannibal contradicted him mildly. “An unnecessary tragedy. It could have been avoided.”

Will said nothing. His face was pale as chalk and his blue iris rotated in its raging sea.

“First Abigail, then my unborn son.” he whispered. Then he laughed out, loud and horrible. “You want me to have nothing in my life that is worth breathing. Nothing that’s not you.”

Hannibal studied his behavior with undisguised, cryptic interest.

“Would this be *so* objectionable?” he asked softly.

“It's sick. And you know it.”

“Plato once claimed that love is just that. A sickness.”

“How can this be *love*?” Will spat in disgust. “You destroy everything that has ever meant something to me!”

“In order to create something new, the old debris must be eliminated. I won’t tolerate that your development is affected by lower circumstances.” Hannibal took a step toward him. Will backed away simultaneously. Hannibal sighed. “It’s **my** form of love, Will. I only want what’s best for you.” He unfolded a half-smile on his face. “You’ll understand soon.”

Will shook his head. Angry. Desperate. Tired of this life.

“ I don’t want to.”

“You already do. If not, you wouldn’t look into my eyes right now as you’ve always avoided before. You would not be here to confront me instead of just pointing a gun at my head. This is progress. *You* are progress.” He went to the fridge, opened it and checked its contents. “Do you stay for dessert?” he asked over his shoulder.

All the reply he received was the crash of his front door as it fell into its deafening lock. Slowly, Hannibal closed the fridge again.

He was not worried. He knew that Will would come back and accept his invitation. For Will understood. Understood *him*. And sooner or later he would be willing to admit and forgive himself for it. Hannibal had forgiven him long since. For the scars on his wrists. For Matthew Brown's attempt to kill him. For all that had happened, and was yet to come. Hannibal did not fear the future. He welcomed it with open arms, for it would be a shared future. (He'd leave no other option than that)

He'd welcome him, regardless of what he did and would do. For he was his martyr, his sinner. His Judas.
...
And God knew he would get *that* kiss. No matter how much blood he had to smear over his face for it.

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